

# SHAKESPEARE IN OPERA AND OLD FLORENTINE MUSIC

## The Week at the Opera.

**MONDAY**—"Les Huguenots," Mmes. Deshayes, Hempel and Allen, Messrs. Caruso, Scotti, Fother and Didur.

**WEDNESDAY**—"Tristan and Isolde," Mmes. Fremstad and Matzenauer, Messrs. Barriani, Weil and Griswold.

**THURSDAY** afternoon, special matinee—"The Secret of Suzanne" and "Palladio," Mmes. Farrar, Messrs. Caruso, Gilly and others.

**FRIDAY**—"Otello," Mmes. Alda, Messrs. Slezak and Amato.

**SATURDAY**—"Siegfried," Mmes. Gadski and Matzenauer, Messrs. Barriani, Fess, Griswold, Gortz and Rissdahl.

**SUNDAY** evening, special performance—"The Tales of Hoffman," with the same cast as yesterday afternoon.

It is a curious fact that the drama of Shakespeare has not more frequently been utilized for the operatic stage. The learned commentator of the *Tribune*, writing of Monday evening's performance of Verdi's great "Otello," touched upon this topic. The subject is interesting, in the living repertoire of the lyric stage the Shakespearean list narrows itself down to "Romeo and Juliet," "Hamlet," "Othello" and "Falstaff," with occasional performances in Germany of Nicolai's "Merry Wives of Windsor." Once in a lifetime there may be a sporadic uprising of Gounod's "Taming of the Shrew."

For such works as Rossini's "Otello" and Bellini's "Capriccio di Montecchi" are buried deep under Norma recently discovered in the blue waters of the Mediterranean. Few know how many more dramas have been composed on Shakespearean plays; and yet, singularly, it is that certain of his works are not attempted at all.

Why does not some one in these progressive times compose an opera on "The Tempest"? Certainly it is a fruitful subject for the lyric dramatist. And it has not been neglected. "The Tempest," music by Smith, was produced in London in 1856. Then there was "La Tempesta," music by no less a greatly named one than Caruso, given in Naples in 1896. Partly made of the Shakespearean play was "La Tempesta," two act opera, book by Scribner, music by Haverly, brought out in London in 1899.

The oldest of the long time, however, seems to have been "The Tempest," music by Locke, produced in London in 1673, which antedated even Purcell's work put forward in 1690. In 1760 Vintona's "Der Sturm" was introduced to Germany. As late as 1880 another "Tempest" was produced in Paris at the Chatelet. The book was by Silvestro and Burton and the music by Duvernoy, Gabrielle Krantz and Faure were the cast.

These works are all dead and likely to stay so. But with the method of treating Shakespeare pointed out to the modern opera composer by that master of masters, Verdi, why should not we have a new lyric setting of "The Tempest"? Why should the beautiful imaginative world of Prospero and Miranda be closed to us, as it is?

There are two other plays of Shakespeare which seem to clamor for operatic treatment. One is "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and the other is "As You Like It." What a bewitching prima donna rôle might be made of Rosalind! And could any tenor hope for anything better than Orlando? The success of the mood, the rapid play of the comedy, the perfect balance of some of the dramatic episodes are so much material ready to the hand of the musician.

The delicate invention of Bishop found food in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," but the record of operas on the subject seems to begin and end with his work, produced in London in 1816. There is in this brilliant scherzo of the Elizabethan master all the subject matter that a composer of buoyant fancy could desire. But there is no second Verdi to take up these works.

The probability is that every musician who examines one of these more imaginative comedies of Shakespeare with a view to treating it as an opera is staggered by the formidable nature of the task which lies before him. To set Shakespeare to mere music is by no means difficult, but to preserve the spirit of the poetic thought is something that few may hope to do.

The last act of "Falstaff," for example, is unapproachable in its own exquisite beauty and its translation into music of the poetic moods of the Shakespearean play. It is one of the greatest achievements in all modern dramatic music. And furthermore let us not hesitate to declare that in the composition of music of this particular type the modern composer, standing on the foundations reared by the romantic school of the early nineteenth century, can achieve what was utterly beyond the reach of the classic opera writer.

It was Mozart who first showed us how to make the supernatural realistic, and when Weber, troading in his footsteps, gave the world his "Der Freischütz," and Schubert graver in miniature his dense drama, "Der Erl König," the path to the later development was opened wide and was clearly marked. It remained only for the element of humor, of playful fancy, to be developed, and this is the one thing in which that extraordinary man, Verdi, differed from his Italian predecessors.

The opera buffa teems with fun, but it is the sort of fun one finds in the stilling sort of "Il Barbiere di Siviglia." There is no delicate fancy, no vein of wit, no easy flight into the unseen in all this. In Verdi's "Falstaff" these other qualities stand out conspicuously. This composer could have translated Puck and Ariel into music. He could have sung the sonorous periods of Prospero and with equal facility could have turned to the elusive caprices of Rosalind.

But these are not easy subjects for musical treatment. Far simpler indeed is to compose tragedies. And why not? There are yet themes in Shakespeare, and since in those days it is easier to get singers who can make effects with big voices and explosive declamation than those who can thrill the ear with passages that flow like oil, why not write operas on Shakespearean tragedies? Alas! what is the probability that any one else will have

the hardihood to undertake another score on this play for years to come. This is indeed a pity, for if the truth must be told (and this seems to be a good time to tell a little of it), Gounod's opera is not a great work. There is really no substantial reason why some one should not sit down and compose a better one on this same play and thus gently put to sleep this distinctly weak and watery adaptation of a strong drama.

Ambrose Thomas's "Hamlet" is a sad-sounding thing. If it were not for the occasional advent of some exceptional barytone like Titta Ruffo the opera would never be taken down from the shelf. But leading barytone parts are not numerous, and when the barytone is the "star" he naturally desires to occupy the center of the stage. So the score of "Hamlet" is got out and dusted off and the rehearsals begin. The barytone sings a drinking song and the soprano has a mad scene. When it is all over that is all you can remember.

"Hamlet," to tell the truth, is not a very good subject for an opera. Several composers have taken a hand at it, but there is no record of a really fine work. The subject wants the most fruitful musical inspirations. There is too much revenge, too little love. "Macbeth," "Julius

Caesar," "King Lear"—these again are lacking in the best materials for musical treatment. But why under the canopy the musicians are not continually failing over one another in their eagerness to compose "Antony and Cleopatra" it is impossible to conjecture. All the passions of the heart, all the baffled aspirations of a weak spirit, all the concentrated seduction of Lillith and her race, these are poured into the splendid poetry of this mighty drama, so perfectly suited for musical embodiment.

The riches may perhaps be embarrassing, but the skill of a good librettist might serve to reduce the action of the Shakespearean play to the few vital episodes for music. There is room, too, for all the spectacular features which have been so potent a charm of opera for the general public. The subject is enticing, and there is no living work dealing with it. So far as the writer knows there are only two dead ones, that of Kalfas, produced in Breslau in 1871, and that of the Count of Saxe-Wittenstein, brought out at Prague in 1885.

The concert of the Schola Cantorum on Wednesday evening brought to the attention of local music lovers creations quite unknown. Among them were the portions of Alessandro Striggio's madrigal drama "Il Cicalamento delle Donne al Bucato" and of Orazio Vecchi's "L'Amfiparnaso." These works belong to the period immediately preceding the invention of recitative by the young Florentines. Indeed the first experiments in "monody," as it was called, were going on while yet the Italian world of fashion was congregating at the performances of the madrigal plays.

The history of music are misleading as a rule in their accounts of the events of this time, much in the same way as they err in treating of the art of Palestrina and its relation to the preservation of polyphonic church music. In general the idea conveyed to us is that the secular music of this period was written in polyphony (that is, in several voice parts), the construction being on contrapuntal lines. Because it was written this way, we are told, it sounded very much like the music of the church, and it was for this reason that dissatisfaction arose and that method of packing away in a "confinement" the subsidiary parts of the polyphony so that the melodic principal part should be permitted to stand out in the

form of a solo. This method of condensation is called through lasso and it became a most important factor in music up to the time of Handel.

Naturally music lovers of to-day are not intensely interested in the historical lessons to be obtained from such a concert as that of Wednesday evening, but they certainly should be pleased to learn that in the scores of old works long buried and some of them forgotten there are beautiful things quite capable of giving delight to listeners in these young days of the twentieth century.

There is one more thing worthy of mention, namely that the art of the early composers is almost invariably joyful, joy giving, uplifting. It is an art which strove always for beauty and had no message of soul sadness or nervous unrest to deliver. Would that we could hear more and more of the old time music. It is not exciting, as the music of Puccini is, for example, but why should we demand of art that it shall astonish, shock or frighten us?

Some day perhaps some one will give a profoundly conceived and adequately executed performance of such a work as the "Orfeo" of Monteverdi, and there will be a great awakening. At any rate let us pray for it.

W. J. HENDERSON.

solists are Mischa Elman, David Bispham, Mr. Van Hood and George Barrère. On the return of the orchestra on Sunday, January 26, a Bach-Debussy programme will be given with Ernesto Consolo and George Barrère as the soloists.

The Philharmonic Society of New York at Scranton last night completed a week's tour, which included Buffalo, Rochester, Auburn, Gloversville and Elmira, the third trip of the orchestra this season. To-morrow evening, January 13, the Philharmonic, at Princeton, will open its annual series of concerts given under the auspices of Princeton University. At the next Philharmonic concert in Carnegie Hall, Thursday evening, January 16, and Friday afternoon, January 17, Max Pauer, the eminent German pianist, director-general of the Stuttgart Conservatory, will make his first American appearance. Highly esteemed in the chief symphony concerts of Europe, his visit to this country is a notable feature of the musical season. Mr. Pauer will be heard in Mendelssohn's concerto in G minor, said to have been a favorite work of the composer, which Mendelssohn himself introduced to the public in Munich in October, 1841, scoring an immediate success. Other selections on this Philharmonic programme comprise Beethoven's "Pastoral" Symphony No. VI, Mozart's overture to "The Marriage of Figaro," and the "Carnival" overture of Dvorak, the second of his trilogy "Nature, Life and Love," the first being "In Nature,"

major, opus 161; the Brahms trio in B major, opus 8, for piano and strings, in which the members of the quartet will have the assistance of Clarence Adler, and the Grieg quartet in G minor, opus 27.

A Wagner festival will be given at the fourth symphony concert for young people on Saturday afternoon, February 8, in Carnegie Hall. The programme for this concert, which commemorates the 100th anniversary of the birth of Richard Wagner, the great master of opera, will consist entirely of excerpts from the music dramas and will be played by the New York Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Walter Damrosch.

Francis Rogers, barytone, and Howard Brockway, composer, will give a concert in Aeolian Hall on Wednesday at 3 P. M. The programme: Come and Trip it, Handel; L'Angeli dal Cielo Bene, Sarti; Furioso spara il Vento, Handel; Tappeschnon der Schindler, Brahms; Der Astron, Rubinstein; Eros, Grieg.

Romance, op. 21, No. 3, Mr. Rogers; Serenade, op. 28, Howard Brockway; Suite, op. 30, No. 2, Howard Brockway; At Twilight, Howard Brockway; Unrest, Mr. Brockway.

## Concerts of the Week.

**SUNDAY**—Symphony Society, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M.  
Maurum Brockway Ensemble, Rumford Hall, 8:30 P. M.  
Popular concert, Metropolitan Opera House, 8:15 P. M.  
**MONDAY**—Josef Lievin, piano recital, Carnegie Hall, 3 P. M.  
Paolo Gruppe, cello concert, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.  
**TUESDAY**—Clara Butt and Kennerley Rumford, Carnegie Hall, 3 P. M.  
Kneisel Quartet, Aeolian Hall, 8:15 P. M.  
**WEDNESDAY**—Francis Rogers and Howard Brockway, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M.  
**THURSDAY**—Philharmonic Society, Carnegie Hall, 8:15 P. M.  
**FRIDAY**—Philharmonic Society, Carnegie Hall, 2:30 P. M.  
**SATURDAY**—Louis Persinger, violin recital, Aeolian Hall, 3 P. M.

those works in collaboration with his accompanist, the Dresden composer Roland Boquet.

Gottfried Galston, the Munich pianist now touring America, is meeting with success in the West. In San Francisco Christmas evening he played at Lotta's Fountain to the immense audience of 100,000 people. After he had made his final appearance the Mayor of the city led the vast assemblage in three cheers for the artist.

Evan Williams, the Welsh tenor, who will give a song recital in Aeolian Hall on Sunday afternoon, January 19, at 8 o'clock, will include in his programme compositions by such great composers as Handel, Schubert and Haydn, and a group of Welsh songs as well as many smaller songs by such composers as Rachmaninoff, Spross and Cadman. Mr. Williams will have Charles Gilbert Spross as his accompanist.

Carl Hunter, the Canadian tenor who will give his first New York recital in Aeolian Hall on Wednesday afternoon, January 22, at 8 o'clock, was born in Canada, but at an early age he went to Germany to study the piano, which he did for several years, but later gave up the idea of becoming a professional pianist and took up singing. Of late years he has devoted himself to the study of opera and has sung many times under the well-known composer and director Hans Pfitzner. Mr. Hunter will have the assistance of Charles Gilbert Spross at his recital.

Miss Elena Gerhardt, the German soprano whose success in this country last season surpassed that of any soprano who has visited this country in recent years, returned to this country last week and is now making an extensive tour with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Miss Gerhardt will be heard in this city at her own song recital in Aeolian Hall on Tuesday afternoon, January 28, at 8 o'clock.

Ernest Schelling, the American pianist, who will give his second New York recital in Carnegie Hall on Sunday afternoon, January 25, at 2:30 o'clock, is filling engagements these next two weeks with the Theodore Thomas Orchestra and is making a short tour of Canada.

The Hamburg Stadttheater, one of the leading opera houses of Europe, from which Mmes. Schumann-Heink and Mme. Matzenauer came to us, now boasts of possessing Ottile Metzger, the distinguished contralto whose achievements are attracting wide attention abroad. At the last Bayreuth Wagner festival she was pronounced "one of the few great artists who are the mainstay of the festival, with but one competitor, Schumann-Heink." Last October when Caruso sang in Hamburg as "guest" Ottile Metzger, it is reported, fully shared the honors with him, and at the Bremen opera, where both appeared as "guests" in "Carmen," she repeated the success. In London, Berlin and Vienna she is recognized as one of the foremost artists of the day. New York will soon have an opportunity of hearing this singer, thanks to the enterprise of the New York Philharmonic Society, which has secured her as soloist for the concert of January 23 and 24 at Carnegie Hall. These will be Mme. Metzger's only American appearances, as she comes under a contract with the Philharmonic and is obliged to return at once to resume her European engagements.

Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari has completed the composition of a new comic opera. It is entitled, "Der Liebhäber als Arzt," and the subject is taken from Moliere's comedy "L'Amour Médecin." Wolf-Ferrari speaks of his new opera in the following manner: "Der Liebhäber als Arzt" signifies a step forward in the development of the comic opera. I have adopted a little ballet in the first act, "Quattro Reali," and "Il Segreto di Suzanne" and I should like to design as culminating points in the music the comical consultation of the physicians and a quartet of the second act. I admitted also a little ballet in the new work. The first representation of my novelty will probably be in the spring of the year 1913, should it be possible for me to terminate in time the instrumentation of this work.

Beethoven's quartet in A minor will be the principal feature of the Honezley quartet's second subscription concert in Aeolian Hall, Monday afternoon, February 25, at 8 o'clock. The programme numbers include the Mozart quartet in B flat major and the Beethoven quartet in C major.

Putnam Griswold's song recital in Aeolian Hall, Monday afternoon, January 25, will afford the house's admirers an opportunity to hear him in songs of Martini, Carissimi, Haydn, Sidney Homer, Marion Bauer, Emil Polak, Schubert, Wolf, Brahms, Schumann and Richard Strauss.

Mme. Blanche Arral is announced for a concert to be given in conjunction with Miss Betty Askenasy, pianist, and Heinrich Aska, cellist, in Aeolian Hall, Saturday evening, January 25. The French prima donna will sing an aria from "Hamlet," the czerdas from the "Boggar's Student," a serenade by Broga and aaria from Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet." Mr. Aska will play Camille Saint-Saens's concerto in A minor and composers of Chopin, Schubert and Van Goens. Miss Askenasy's numbers will include compositions of Schumann, Aransky, Scriabine and Liszt.

The joint recital arranged for Miss Alice Nielsen and John McCormack at Carnegie Hall Sunday afternoon, January 19, will undoubtedly prove to be one of the most popular events of the season. This will be Miss Nielsen's first appearance in concert in New York this season and the event will be looked forward to with a good deal of interest by her many admirers.

The Eastern branch of the Alumnus of Lake Erie College, which is situated at Painesville, Ohio, announce a Chopin recital by Sigmund Stojowski at the MacDowell Club Hall on Saturday evening, January 18.

The St. Cecilia Club, Victor Harris conductor, will sing a programme of part songs in Aeolian Hall on Wednesday evening under the auspices of the People's Symphony Society.



Mme. Clara Butt and Kennerley Rumford, Carnegie Hall, Tuesday Afternoon, Jan. 14



Miss Farrar in costume, Carnegie Hall, Wednesday Afternoon, Jan. 15



Paulo Gruppe, Cellist, Aeolian Hall, Monday Eve. Jan. 13



Francis Rogers, Baritone, Aeolian Hall, Wednesday Afternoon, Jan. 15



Marie Rappold, soprano, A Boston Opera Favorite.



Max Pauer first American Appearances at Carnegie Hall, Jan. 16-17.

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"Amfiparnaso" is of later date, by some thirty years, and yet here we find music still more infectious in humor and melodious in character.

The love scene of Isabella and Lucio, which was in Mr. Schindler's programme, should be sufficient to show just what was the radical defect in the madrigal drama. The composer undertook to carry on his entire musical plan with madrigals written in five voice parts. When he wished to compose such a scene as that heard on Wednesday he constructed his polyphonic music in such a way that when Isabella was speaking only the soprano and contralto voices sang, and when Lucio was speaking the music was passed over to the male voices. The audience of Wednesday evening was quick to note this and to smile audibly when the women of the chorus sang "Oh, Lucio," and the men answered "Oh, Isabella."

But to push the matter to its conclusion, these composers found themselves in their greatest musical dilemma when they wished to represent the speech of a single personage, as in a monologue. To evade this difficulty they adopted the clumsy expedient of causing all their five voice parts to interweave in a solid polyphony. Thus a single speaker on the stage was even more remote from direct personal communication than two or three actors at a time were.

It was not the moods of this music which aroused the young Florentines to action; it was its utter want of intelligibility. Giulio Caccini and Jacopo Peri, two of the great fathers of Italian opera, were singers, musicians and composers. They were engaged in some of the performances of madrigal plays and spectacular productions in which polyphonic music was employed. They felt that the whole thing was radically wrong, and they, like their friends, set to work to find out a better way.

The special trait of the music to which these men objected was its technical construction. They determined that polyphonic music was wholly unsuited to the drama, except in its choruses, because the continual interweaving of the parts made the text unintelligible. There were secondary objections of a technical nature, but this was the great cause. It was by reason of this that some one of the coteries, we do not know which, devised that method of packing away in a "confinement" the subsidiary parts of the polyphony so that the melodic principal part should be permitted to stand out in the



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the third "Othello," Josef Stransky will also offer Liszt's Symphonic Poem No. XI, "The Battle of the Huns."

On Tuesday evening, January 21, the Hess Soloists Ensemble of America, which made its initial bow before a select audience at the Colony Club last Tuesday evening, will give its first public performance at Aeolian Hall at 8:15. The programme to be presented comprises numbers in German and English, there being three of the former: "Der Abend," "Andie Heimat" and "Rosenlied" in kypsy song, all composed by Johannes Krysman. Among the English songs are "The Young and the Old Marie" (women), "Johnnie" (J. Haydn), "My Love Dwell in Northern Land" (Edward Elgar), "Summer Day" (Ludwig Hess), "Hymn to Night" (Beethoven) and eleven Scotch, English and Irish songs also by Beethoven.

This organization is in many respects a new one in America. Many choral and quartet societies exist in this country, but not one composed of first class soloists, vocal as well as instrumental. The head of this organization is Ludwig Hess, who is well known throughout the country as a singer, having appeared last season with many of the musical organizations in America.

The Kneisel Quartet will give the third concert of its regular subscription series at the new Aeolian Hall on Tuesday evening, January 14, at 8:15. The opening number will be the quartet in C minor, opus 51, No. 1, by Brahms (1833-1897). This quartet, with its companion in A minor, was not continuous in its composition. As early as 1868 Brahms had played over parts of the first one to Mme. Schumann, along with the newly finished "Deutsches Requiem." For some years they lay in his desk unaltered, and not until August, 1873, did he play both of them, finally completed, to her. It was performed privately by the Joachim quartet in Berlin and for the first time publicly at a Hellmesberger concert in Vienna on December 11, 1873. This will be followed by the quartet in E major for three violins, viola and violoncello by Charles Martin Loeffler. Born in Mulhausen, Alsacia, in January, 1861, he studied the violin with Leonard and Massart in Paris and with Joachim in Berlin. He was long connected with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, giving up his position there to devote himself entirely to composition. In this number the members of the quartet will be assisted by Samuel Gardner. The quartet in G minor, opus 27, by Grieg, ends the programme.

The second concert of the Kneisel Quartet in Brooklyn will be given at Memorial Hall, Y. W. C. A. Building, on Friday evening, January 24, at 8:15. The programme will be made up of the Schubert quartet in G

Would Thy Faith  
Were Mine  
Propose  
Ariadne  
Lend Me Thy Fillet  
Love  
Cattle Song  
Aubade  
Hunting Song  
The Three Ravens  
Turn Ye to Me  
Trotting to the Fair  
Off to Philadelphia  
Joseph Lievin, pianist, will play the following programme at Carnegie Hall to-morrow at 3 P. M.

Fantasia and Fugue, G minor, Bach-Liszt Sonata, op. 81, Beethoven On Wings of Song, Mendelssohn-Liszt El Contrabandista, Schumann-Liszt Variations on the Theme of Pagani (two series), Brahms Improvisation G flat, Chopin Nocturne, op. 9, No. 3, Chopin Fantasia F minor, Chopin Gavotte D major, Glazounov Islamey (Oriental Fantasy), Balakireff

The second concert of the Adele Margules Trio, Adele Margules, pianist, Leopold Lichtenberg, violinist, and Leo Schulz, cellist, will be given in Aeolian Hall on Tuesday evening, January 28.

Mme. Clara Butt, the English contralto, and her husband, Kennerley Rumford, barytone, will follow their Tuesday recital in Carnegie Hall with a special popular concert in the Hippodrome Sunday evening, January 19. The English artists will be assisted by Manuel Klein and his orchestra and the programme will be one designed to make a special popular appeal. Among other features will be several songs which have long been associated with Mme. Butt's name.

Max Pauer, the Stuttgart pianist, who is to tour America this season, arrived on the Victoria Louise from Bremen Friday. After his appearance with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra January 16 and 17 Mr. Pauer will play his first American recital in the new Aeolian Hall, Tuesday afternoon, January 21, at 3 o'clock. At the Philharmonic concerts Mr. Pauer will play Mendelssohn's G minor concerto.

Leon Rains, who will be the soloist with the New York Philharmonic Society January 29, will institute an innovation in the programme of orchestral concerts with vocal soloists. Instead of the usual concert aria, which with the permission of Mr. Stransky will be omitted, Mr. Rains will sing two Strauss songs, "Winterreise" and "Der Streikloper," and the great French ballad, "Archibald Douglas." Mr. Rains has arranged the orchestration of

## NOTES OF MUSIC EVENTS.

The concert of the New York Symphony Society, Walter Damrosch, conductor, this afternoon will be devoted entirely to the works of Richard Wagner. Paul Althouse of the Metropolitan Opera House will be the soloist, singing the prize song from "Die Meistersinger" and Siegmund's love song from "Die Walkure." The orchestra will play the "Rienzi" overture, the preludes to "Lohengrin" and "Die Meistersinger," the Rachehymn from the Paris version of "Tannhauser," the love music from Act II of "Tristan and Isolde," the prelude and a part of the first scene of "Das Rheingold," arranged for concert performance by Mr. Damrosch, and the "Ride of the Valkyries" from "Die Walkure." Immediately after the concert the orchestra will leave for its annual winter tour of two weeks, visiting Toronto, Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, Columbus, Fairmont, Pittsburg, &c. Among the